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The bigger the challenge, the bigger the opportunity for growth.

I hope this message finds you well and in good spirits under the circumstances. To say we are living and working in strange times would be the understatement of the year. So many challenges have been thrust at each of us in all areas of our lives. I mentioned in my last message these challenges also come with opportunities. One of the opportunities before us is to host Fall Retreat and the School Librarian Conference online. The Association has not attempted an online-only modality in the past. A tremendous thanks to each of these planning committee members and Debbi for working through the organizing and logistics of what a successful online retreat/conference will look like. To be sure, there will be some hiccups along the way. But I encourage you all to be patient and open-minded to this style of offering as I think this is a great new path toward more engagement and access for all Association members. On the heels of these undertakings, Governor Bullock’s Mask Directive for counties with four (4) or more active cases has also changed how our Association member’s libraries look and feel to the public. (For the full directive, please visit here.) Regardless of your opinion on the pandemic or the effectiveness of masks, I think we can all agree that an open economy is better than one that is shuttered. We can all do our part to practice and promote the three Ws: wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance when around others.

I would like to take a moment to say how proud I am of each of you regarding how your libraries have continued to serve the public. It is most certainly a strange notion that we have limited access while still trying to elevate services—just writing this sentence makes my mind whirl. As you continue to develop new strategies, please share them with the Association. If you would like to send me your creative and innovative solutions, I will track these ideas and have them shared on WIRED or on the Association’s website and with the State Library. So many of you have risen to the challenge of leadership in these turbulent times that it gives me great confidence about the current state and future of libraries in Montana. This is not to say that there have not been difficulties. But the difficulties I have experienced have been solved by reaching out to our peers. Should you be experiencing something that you can’t solve yourself, please reach out to other members of the Association. Regardless of what type of library, staff or budget size, or any other label that differentiates our libraries, let’s continue to strive to help each other overcome our obstacles.

Finally, I need your help. In addition to the pandemic and economic woes we are currently experiencing, there is another issue that needs to be addressed: diversity and representation within the Association. At the last Board meeting (meeting notes can be found here), a conversation amongst a handful of us explored what it means to have diversity and representation within the Association. It was a productive conversation. But it was also a conversation that was had without the primary people that need to be involved. Going forward, I would like to start three new Interest Groups: BIPOC; LGBTQI+; and, Universal Accessibility. The intent is to have these groups evolve into three new Standing Committees. More details will be shared on the Association’s webpage as these groups develop.
then, I ask that you think about providing your leadership and voice in one of these areas. We are a wonderful tapestry of humanity in Montana, it is time we overtly share this with all.

Until next time: Be well. Be safe.

Gavin J. Woltjer
MLA President
Acting Public Information Officer, City of Billings
Library Director, Billings Public Library

(Photo by Banik Communications)

[ Gavin Woltjer can be reached at woltjerg@billingsmt.gov ]

What’s the President reading?

Reading, for me, during the pandemic has been a challenge. Whereas before the pandemic I was a three or four books a week Reader, now I am struggling to find things that keep my attention. Unfortunately, concentration is in short supply when not needed for work or dealing with family affairs. Because of this, I have limited my reading to poetry, short stories, or non-fiction that does not require me to delve too deeply into the topic. If you, too, have found reading a struggle during this time, I encourage you to keep pushing forward, find something that keeps your attention, and offers moments of respite that also exercises your imagination and allows for exploration of the many wonders of the written-word landscape.

Here are some recent reads that would make excellent additions to any library.

Jihyun Yun's Some Are Always Hungry (University of Nebraska Press, 2020) is a poetry collection that has had an immediate effect on me. This collection chronicles a family's wartime survival, immigration, and generational trauma through the lens of food and familial communion. Each of these dinner table poems provides unique insight into her family history that invites the reader to reflect on their own family. A wonderful addition to this collection is the many wonderful recipes populated throughout the text.

926 Years (Sublunary Press, 2020) by the American and Australian writing team of Kyle Coma-Thompson and Tristan Foster is a unique little masterpiece of microfiction. Collaborating from afar, these two authors create twenty-two interlocked stories that explore human relationships across a multitude of boundaries. Regardless of the boundary, each story showcases how deeply intertwined
each of us is with each other. Even when apart, we are connected in ways that are seen and unseen alike.

Revelation: An Apocalypse in Fifty-Eight Fights (Press 53, 2020) by Andrew Rihn has been the biggest reading surprise these past few months. As a fan of the NES’s Mike Tyson’s Punch Out!! as a kid, this collection of prose poems took me down memory lane. I have vivid memories of watching a Tyson fight with my father on HBO or pay-per-view throughout my middle and high school years. In the beginning, it was never a question if Tyson would win the bout; rather, it was a question of how long will an opponent last in the ring with this seemingly unstoppable gladiator. This collection recalls Tyson’s fights in chronological order—from the earliest days of Kid Dynamite to the metamorphosis of Iron Mike—in one-hundred words or less. (This self-imposed restriction gives the reader a feeling of the three-minute round most of these fights never reach.) Ultimately, this beautifully poetic micro-biography provides keen insights into a complex man that experiences great highs only to come to crashing lows. Rihan’s use of language and metaphor give this read the one-two combo of a skilled prizefighter, er, wordsmith. The notes section at the end of the collection adds another layer of insight and understanding that makes the reader feel for the fighters against Tyson, but also for Tyson himself.

Finally, as a baseball fanatic—who is currently experiencing great withdrawal—I was fortunate enough to be given a copy of The Wax Pack: On the Open Road in Search of Baseball’s Afterlife (University of Nebraska Press, 2020) by Brad Balukjian. This book explores what happens to major league ballplayers after they have taken their final swing or thrown their final pitch. But instead of focusing on the men that will most likely be remembered, Balukjian chose the men he would highlight by opening an unopened pack of baseball cards from 1986. Crisscrossing the US, covering over 11,000 miles, Balukjian has the opportunity to meet most of the players from this pack of cards. In the end, most of the players, who have already been forgotten, live quite lives as businessmen or still participate in the game in some capacity in the lower levels. An excellent read that does not try to uphold or deconstruct any mythos of what it is like to be a major league baseball player. (Side note: I had the opportunity to speak with the author via phone and he would make for a very entertaining author visit.)

If none of these titles strike your fancy, you can always go on Netflix and watch “The Babysitter’s Club” or the newly rebooted “Unsolved Mysteries”—both series are delightful.

For more book recommendations, follow me on Twitter: @GavinWoltjer. If you have suggestions of your own, let me know. Happy Reading!

THANK YOU!

Gavin J. Woltjer
MLA President
Acting Public Information Officer, City of Billings
Library Director, Billings Public Library

(Photos per websites of authors Jihyun Yun, Tristan Foster, and Andrew Rihn)

[ Gavin Woltjer can be reached at woltjerg@billingsmt.gov ]

- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE -
Debbi Kramer's Update

Another membership year has begun for the Montana Library Association. MLA was started in 1906 which makes this membership year our 115th year. It really doesn't seem possible that MLA has been working to educate Montana librarians for that long.

I know that many of you were under the assumption that I was retiring as the end of the 2020 membership year. That was my plan until Covid-19 threw a monkey wrench into my plans. I spoke to the MLA board and together we decided it was in the best interest of MLA for me to spend one more year at the helm and help MLA through this difficult year. With the loss of the revenue from MLA's major revenue stream, the annual conference, it was time to look for other revenue in order to continue to operate for another year. MLA has also lost substantial revenue ($4,000) from our personalized MLA license plates. MLA is pleased to announce that with grants from Humanities Montana CARES Act and a Montana Social Services Non-Profit grant MLA has a small cushion to continue operating. I would like to send a special thank you to outgoing MLA Secretary-Treasurer Megan Stark for writing and securing both grants.

As MLA moves forward through the 2020-21 membership many changes are on the horizon. Two of the changes are quite significant. The first is migrating to a membership software program to replace the membership database and the second is virtual conferences.

The MLA board of directors at its June meeting voted to purchase a membership software package. The software purchased was Wild Apricot. The software will integrate seamlessly into the current MLA website. In fact, many of you may not even know the new software is in use. Wild Apricot will enable MLA to manage memberships, manage event registration, and contact members with many types of email messages. MLA will even be able to deliver the FOCUS newsletter to your inbox. With the member's only section of the website, members will be able to contact other librarians because the information that is now excluded from the MLA website due to privacy concerns will be visible. You will be able to contact your fellow librarians with questions or concerns without posting in Wired. It is our hope that this new membership software will increase membership in MLA with its great features.

I am working vigorously to set up the new software. It is my hope to have the software in place by September 1st. An announcement will be made on WiredMT when the software is ready for use. It is my hope that the integration process will go flawlessly and quickly.

The second significant change in the MLA landscape will be moving to a virtual conference for the Fall Retreat. Fall Retreat was set for October 18-19, 2020 at Chico Hot Springs Resort. Due to complications from the Covid-19 virus and MLA's goal to keep all our members safe, the MLA Executive Board and ASLD and PLD division chairs made the difficult decision to move to a virtual conference for the 2020 Fall Retreat. For those of you who attended the MLA workshops presented in April and May, the format will be very much the same. Workshops will be presented through Zoom meetings and those workshops will be archived for later viewing if you are unable to attend during the retreat timeframe. Fall Retreat workshops will be presented on Sunday afternoon, October 18th, and Monday morning, October 19th. Planning and carrying out a virtual conference will be a new undertaking and I'm sure there will be problems, but the ASLD, PLD division chairs, and conference planners will do their best to present a smooth, educational retreat.

The MLA 2020-21 fiscal year budget has been posted on the MLA website. [http://www.mtlib.org/governance/reports/](http://www.mtlib.org/governance/reports/) Please look over the budget and contact me with any questions or concerns. Also, the draft minutes from the June board meeting are posted on the MLA website as well. [http://www.mtlib.org/governance/minutes/](http://www.mtlib.org/governance/minutes/)
Editor's Message

I hope everyone has been able to get out and enjoy some of the beautiful Montana summer weather we've been having. I've been trying to spend as much time outside as possible this summer. I recently finished reading "Woodpeckers and Warblers" by Sneed B. Collard III. It's a great book about a father and son and a year they spend birding together. After reading the book I felt myself looking at the birds around me more and wondering about the many different species we have here in Montana. I also realized my bird recognition skills need some serious work! But I really enjoyed the book and I also enjoyed how it made me start looking for birds more as I'm outside enjoying the nice weather.

As summer starts to wind down there is a lot of talk of going back to school and how that is going to look in the current climate. I'm not sure anyone knows for sure what's going to happen with schools this fall and the best we can do is just be prepared for anything and everything. If there's one thing that we've learned in the last 4 months it's to be flexible. So as schools begin to reopen let's hope for the best and keep a positive attitude. To quote Gavin remember "the three Ws: wear a mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance when around others."

Star Bradley
Co-Editor MLA FOCUS

Photo by Rachelle McLain

MLA Awards Committee

Congratulations to all the 2020 Montana Library Association award winners! MLA will recognize these individuals and institutions for their outstanding contributions to the Montana Library community at next week's Beyond Hindsight: Envisioning a Collaborative Future Conference.

Connie Behe, director of Imagine IF Libraries, will be recognized for her recent work handling a book challenge, respectfully handling diverse opinions, and promoting constitutional rights with the Pat Williams Intellectual Freedom Award.

The Imagine IF Libraries will also be presented with the Public Library Program of the Year Award in recognition of their Making Montana Program.

The Honorary Life MLA Membership will be awarded to Debbi Kramer, retiring director of the Montana Library Association for her remarkable lifelong service to Montana's libraries and the communities.
The School Library Division Summer Retreat was held online on Wednesday, July 22. Members met to learn and interact with colleagues, including Danna Bell from the Library of Congress, who presented "Library of Congress 101." She covered tools such as Primary Source Sets, Maps, Sound Recordings, LoC Webinars, Summer Seminars for teachers, the LoC Blog, Ask a Librarian, the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, and more. Bell also introduced the By the People's Virtual Volunteer transcription service, where citizens can help bolster the LoC's digital collection by transcribing original documents. She shared tips on using Ask a Librarian, noting that it's often busy, and gave insight into working with Dr. Carla Hayden. A fun fact: Dr. Hayden will be recording an interview with Colson Whitehead, who recently won the 2020 Library of Congress Prize for American Fiction.

Shaundel Krumheuer from Billings Senior High School presented "Google Tools to Streamline Your Day." Despite a tech hiccup during her presentation, she expertly guided the group through tools like Jamboard, Google Drawings, and Google Omnibox, as well as helpful add-ons.

Cindy Christin, Children's Librarian of Bozeman Public Library, was awarded Librarian of the Year for her efforts in promoting early literacy. Deepest thanks to all the library champions who are improving our lives and our communities.

#informationpowersgrowth #mla2020 #librariespowermt

Carly Delsigne, Chief Librarian, North Jefferson County Library District.
extensions available through the Chrome Web Store. Her tips and tricks revolutionized some professional practices during her session.

The third session of the day, “Collaboration Station,” was delivered by yours truly. Even prior to COVID-19 hitting, many school librarians felt siloed and isolated in their professional roles. As specialists, we are mandated to deliver universally-relevant curriculum with very little collaboration from others. Since COVID-19 completely upset our professional apple carts, we’ve become even more isolated in such a rural, socially- and geographically-distanced state like Montana. I focused on practices and approaches I have found to be successful in my own career in connecting with fellow teachers, building administrators, other school librarians, public librarians, academic librarians, special librarians (my own personal weak spot and one I dearly want to focus on in the coming years—any special librarians want to collaborate with a high school librarian in Bozeman?), vendors and local businesses, and finally the media. If attendees absorbed nothing else from my presentation I hope they walked away with one very key point: School librarians have the power to reach out to stakeholders, friends, and colleagues all around them and start building relationships that will prove mutually beneficial for years to come—all they have to do is ask.

We broke for lunch. Dogs were walked. Well-deserved bio-breaks were observed. Food was eaten. And when we came back together, we were treated to Chani Craig’s presentation, “The SEL School Library in the Time of COVID.” Chani is a school librarian at Whitefish Middle School and throughout her extensive and varied career she has developed an interest in and passion for Social Emotional Learning. Throughout her session, she introduced us to coping mechanisms (both for us and for our students), SEL-sensitive approaches to interactions with students and colleagues, and the ways in which teaching and modeling information literacy is inextricably linked with SEL, especially in a post-COVID world. And that doesn’t even scratch the surface. Chani has a wealth of knowledge, resources, and inspiration about SEL and, given that Montana was already number one in suicide rates among all 50 United States before COVID hit, it’s all the more important now that we embrace our roles as school librarians in integrating and championing Social Emotional Learning in our libraries.

Wrapping up our formal sessions for the day, we had Ann Ewbank, Noelle Harper, and Shaundel Krumheuer presenting their session “K-12 Library Media/Information Literacy Content Standards Update.” Before we all went into self-isolation, our biggest drama this past school year was the development, revision, approval, and processing of Montana’s new Library Media Content Standards. A saga which began last year with the initial brainstorm of a group of school librarians rose to a fever pitch this past winter as the Negotiated Rule-Making Committee (which all three presenters served on) took up the standards and went through them with a fine-toothed comb prior to submitting them to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction Elsie Arntzen for approval. This presentation covered the history of the development of education content standards in Montana in general before drilling down on the more specific and recent journey our most recent set of standards under consideration have been through over the course of the past year. Ultimately, Superintendent Arntzen approved the robust standards that were developed by Ann Ewbank and championed by school librarians throughout the state (in alliance with other divisions throughout MLA). They are now headed to the Montana Board of Public Education and Ann Ewbank is committed to keeping us all apprised of their progress and what we can do as library professionals in Montana to ensure their passage and adoption.

The day wrapped up with an hour-long breakout session. “Rooms” were divided into categories based upon areas of interest indicated by respondents to a survey sent to school librarians earlier this summer. The goal was to afford ourselves a space for casual conversation, much as we would have had if we had met in-person for our retreat.
In all, I would consider the conference a success. We were intrepid fellow travelers in sometimes frighteningly uncharted waters and we persevered. Through tech glitches, pet interruptions, and planning challenges, we forged ahead and were able to observe some degree of normalcy in a world that is anything but just now. As conference planners, Vic and I learned a great deal that we are eager to share with other members of the MLA board as we approach more conferences that may have to go online in the coming months. And we were thankful for the opportunity to connect with our colleagues across the state. In these lonely and frankly despondent times, hearing voices of encouragement, even if only in a tiny chat box window, is a balm to the soul. As schools and districts decide on whether or not to reopen in the coming weeks and what the start of the school year will look like, we are here for each other!

You can view recordings of the day’s presentations here: https://montana.webex.com/montana/lsr.php?RCID=e0c1fe26093b4e569ad874b6ccc0d938

OPI credits will not be available for the recordings but we feel strongly that the material covered in this year’s SLD Summer Retreat has value beyond CEU’s so we want to try and share that as widely in the MLA community as we can. Thanks to Vic Mortimer, Chani Craig, Ann Ewbank, Debbi Kramer, Stephen Haddad, Jo Flick, Danna Bell, Shaundel Krumheuer, Noelle Harper, and everyone who attended, offered advice and encouragement and helped make this year’s retreat a reality. Librarians truly are the coolest folks around!

*Chani Craig speaking on the subject of Social Emotional Learning during her session. (Photo credit: Brittany Alberson)*

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**within SELF**
- self-awareness (id emotions)
- self-management (regulation)

**interaction with OTHERS**
- social awareness
  (id emotions->empathy)
- relationship skills
  (regulation->interaction)

**all of US**
- responsible decision-making (for the “greatest good of all concerned”)

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**MLA INTEREST GROUP NEWS**

**Trustee Interest Group Update**

Free Virtual Conference for Trustees

Montana State Library (MSL) has joined with United for Libraries, the division of the American Library Association providing support to trustees, Friends groups and Foundation boards, to provide access to a free virtual conference on trusteeship and board leadership. The two-day conference will be held on November 10 & 11 and will feature presentations on topics such as budgeting, board meeting formats, and communication. For more information, visit [this website](https://www.unitedforlibraries.org/events/free-virtual-conference-for-trustees).
New Content on Montana Newspapers

The Montana Historical Society is pleased to announce that new Montana content is available to search and browse on the web site CHRONICLING AMERICA.

Newly Available Titles

- Red Lodge Daily News combined with Carbon County News (1/2/1935-5/1/1936)
- Carbon County News (5/8/1936-7/19/1945)
- Montana Farmer-Stockman (1948-1963)

Chronicling America is hosted by the Library of Congress as part of the National Digital Newspaper Program, which is funded through the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). It is freely accessible to all Internet users with no subscriptions or fees required. To learn more about the National Digital Newspaper Program or Chronicling America, visit https://www.loc.gov/ndnp/ or contact us at MHSDigital@mt.gov.

Natasha Hollenbach
Digital Projects Librarian
Montana Historical Society
nhollenbach@mt.gov

- ARTICLES -

MLA Fall Virtual Retreat

Montana Library Association is pleased to announce our Fall Retreat virtual conference "Librarians in the Picture: Fostering Community, Equitable Library Service." Check out the information and link to registration here: http://www.ala.org/united/events_conferences/virtual

This is a great opportunity for boards to attend some useful sessions and learn from experts without having to travel. By selecting the "live participation" option you'll also get access to all sessions later, so they can be viewed when most convenient - even as part of a future board meeting. Or watch a session, then discuss it as a group.

MSL is also planning a few trustee learning cohorts in the coming months, focusing on specific topics of interest, so watch for more information on those. These will offer more opportunities for trustees to interact with their colleagues from around the state and learn from each other.

Pam Henley, Statewide Consulting Librarian
Montana State Library
Toll Free: 855-419-2616
phenley@mtlib.org
enterprising library enthusiasts. Just think, where else but at the Fall Retreat will you have such a
great opportunity to educate, influence, and entertain Montana librarians? (Well, probably at the MLA
Conference, but that's a different committee.)

Submissions are due to Debbi Kramer by September 1, 2020, at debkmla@hotmail.com. Please keep in
mind that all presentations will be virtual, and cartoon avatars are encouraged.

Since we are losing the appeal of the mineral water and Chico Saloon, please help us make this an
exciting and informative event!

As always, questions are welcome.

Shari Curtis
Adult Services Librarian & Carle Gallery Manager
Butte-Silver Bow Public Library

MLA Receives Humanities Montana Cares Act Relief Funds

For more information, please email Secretary-Treasurer Megan Stark at megan.stark@umontana.edu.

The Montana Library Association has received $5000 through Humanities Montana’s CARES grant program. This rapid-response funding provides general operating support to cultural organizations in the state that have been affected by the COVID-19 health crisis.

“Libraries are more critical now than ever,” said incoming president Gavin Woltjer. “These funds will help ensure that the Montana Library Association continues to connect and support libraries across the state as they work to serve the needs of their communities during this crisis.”

The funds are part of the CARES Act passed by Congress in March. The $2 trillion aid package included $75 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities, approximately $30 million of which was sent to fifty-six state and territorial humanities councils to redistribute to humanities nonprofit organizations in need.

The state humanities councils were chosen to distribute these funds because of their well-established relationships with museums, historical societies, libraries, and cultural institutions that are the cornerstones of some of the most vulnerable and hardest to reach communities.

Humanities Montana is Montana’s state humanities council with a mission to serve communities through stories and conversation. We offer experiences that nurture imagination and ideas by speaking to Montanans’ diverse history, literature, and philosophy. Established in 1972, we are one of fifty-six councils across the nation that the National Endowment for the Humanities created in order to better infuse the humanities directly and effectively into public life. We produce, fund, create, and support humanities-based projects and programs, eye-opening cultural experiences, and meaningful conversations.

Megan Stark
Professor, Undergraduate Services and Outreach Librarian
Mansfield Library - University of Montana
MSU Library announces first ‘read & publish’ agreement with Cambridge University Press

Montana State University Library is pleased to announce a three-year ‘read and publish’ agreement with Cambridge University Press (CUP) that is the first agreement of its kind for MSU.

The ‘read and publish’ agreement will continue to allow MSU faculty, students, and staff full and permanent access to read Cambridge University Press journal articles. Bozeman community members and other non-MSU affiliates can also access these journals by using a computer on the MSU Campus. In addition to the continued read-access to CUP journals, Montana State University authors will be able to publish a select number of articles each year in CUP hybrid or fully open access (OA) journals under this agreement.

The terms of the agreement will allow MSU institutional authors to publish a total of seven Open Access (OA) articles during the calendar year 2020, eight OA articles in 2021, and nine OA articles in 2022. During each calendar year, the article allowance can be used by submitting authors to publish OA at no additional cost. The annual article allowance can also be used to make already published subscription articles OA – a process known as retroactive OA. Any MSU author publishing open access outside of this agreement will also benefit from a 20% discount on the journal article processing charges. Further details on article types and journals included in this agreement are available on Cambridge Core.

MSU Library is excited to support open access initiatives at Montana State University and the broader scholarly community. Cambridge University Press has a number of ‘read and publish’ deals with libraries already in place including agreements with the University of California and Iowa State University. More information on publishing open access with Cambridge University Press can be found here and here.
For more information about the MSU work in this area, please visit the Library’s Negotiating Principles for Information Access and Support for Open Collections and Scholarship sites.

By Rachelle McLain, Collection Development Librarian and Hannah McKelvey, Electronic Resources & Discovery Librarian

Photo by Charles Deluvio on Unsplash

The Montana Book Festival announces its first virtual book festival

The Montana Book Festival—striving to foster an interest in literature for people of all ages, to perpetuate a sense of literary community, and to provide a vibrant, compelling forum for the literary arts that celebrates diversity in and around Montana.

The Montana Book Festival announces its first virtual book festival, scheduled for September 10-12, 2020. This year, the goal is to bring our annual celebration of the written word directly into the homes of readers across Montana, the region, around the country, and—dare we say it?—around the world.

Missoula’s annual book festival pays tribute to the tradition of writing in the West by bringing together authors from across the state, the Rocky Mountain West, and the Pacific Northwest. Since 2015, the Montana Book Festival has been a grassroots organization, relying on individual donations, grants, corporate sponsorships, a handful of dedicated locals, and the enduring support of the Montana literary community to survive. We have worked to build upon the event’s thirty-year legacy while also reinvigorating the Festival with new ideas and fresh perspectives. In 2020, we invite readers and writers everywhere to witness our annual showcase, to be a lasting part of our literary tradition.

Festival events will be viewable from the Montana Book Festival website, as well as from our YouTube channel. Attendees will be able to purchase Festival merchandise directly from our site; and participating authors’ titles will be sold by Missoula’s beloved independent bookstore and Festival partner, Fact & Fiction Books.

Details about virtual MBF programming will be posted regularly to the Festival website. There, you can also subscribe to the MBF newsletter, pledge your sponsorship, and donate.

Follow the Festival on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter (noted below).

E-mail: montanabookfestival@gmail.com
Facebook: @montanabookfestival
Instagram: @montanabookfestival
Twitter: @MTBookFest
Submitable: montanabookfestival.submitable.com/submit
Website: montanabookfestival.com
North Lake County Public Library District Goes Fine Free

The Trustees of the North Lake County Public Library District in Polson, MT voted unanimously to approve a Fine Free Policy for the Library effective August 3, 2020. Library Director, Abbi Dooley states that “late fines are not effective in getting materials returned on time. Many library systems who have taken this step have shown that fines have no impact on materials return rates. Eliminating late fines can have an immensely positive impact on our community by providing more equitable access to materials and library services for everyone.” She also noted that “fines are not a significant source of revenue for us. They account for less than 1% of the library’s total revenue.” The library will make all books, movies, audiobooks, music CDs, and magazines fine free on August 3. Some items will still have late fines such as laptops, telescopes, NASA backpacks, and interlibrary loan materials typically received from out of state.

Dooley stated that items will still have due dates and will be considered lost after 30 days overdue. She encourages library users to sign up for email and text reminders. Dooley is also encouraging anyone with very overdue library materials to bring them back. “We just ask that you help us out by putting your name or library card number on a slip of paper inside the item so we can remove any charges.” The Library will be forgiving any existing late fines on August 3, so Dooley hopes this will give everyone a fresh start and a new opportunity to visit and utilize the services of the Library.

Abbi Dooley, Director
North Lake County Public Library District

Photo by Kat Yukawa on Unsplash

A highlight of New Accessibility Resources
- PROGRAMS, PROMOTIONS, PROJECTS -

2020 Montana Book Award Is Now Accepting Nominations

Each year, the Montana Book Award bestows its annual award on a Montana author in recognition of their contribution to literary and artistic excellence in Montana literature. A committee of readers from throughout the state of Montana reviews and evaluates nominated titles, all of which are either set in Montana, deal with Montana themes/issues or are written, edited, or illustrated by a Montana author or artist. From a wide array of submitted works, the committee unanimously selects one in recognition of astounding quality.

The 2020 Montana Book Award is now accepting nominations for consideration of the next award. Authors, publishers, and members of the public are invited to submit titles for consideration to the committee.

If you are a Montana author, know a Montana author, or are aware of an outstanding book to be published between January-December 2020, please consider submitting a nomination form to the Montana Book Award committee. Submissions are due December 10, 2020. Four copies of the nominated title should be provided so that the committee can share access to the book.

More information about qualifying titles and how to nominate a title for consideration can be found at http://montanabookaward.org/how-to-nominate. Or reach out to the Chair of the Montana Book Award, Elizabeth Jonkel, at montanabookaward@gmail.com.

Elizabeth C. Jonkel
Assistant Director
Missoula Public Library

- MICRO-REVIEWS -

Review of "They Went Left" by Monica Hesse

By Debbie Stewart

At first glance and after inspecting this young adult book, you might think, oh just another depressing World War II book about the Nazi atrocities; but you would be misguided! The aftermath of World War II is addressed here with incredible insights. After liberation how did thousands of prisoners react to "life after the concentration camp? This book offers a wide range of perspectives and emotional depth.
was to describe a condition acquired from combat. What about all those who experienced and witnessed traumatic events from prison? *They Went Left* is a story of Zofia, a physically and mentally broken young girl who starts a journey to reclaim her lost brother. She lost her entire family except for Abek, to the left line that led to the camp’s gas chambers.

Monica Hesse takes the readers deep into Zofia’s thoughts, she combines history, romance, and mystery to create a raw, honest, hopeful depiction of trauma. Several twists and turns, powerful writing, and a compelling plot will draw you into this rich story and linger in your thoughts.

(Photo per website of author Monica Hesse)

**Debbie Stewart**  
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**Submissions Open for the October 2020 Issue!**

**REMINDER:** The submission deadline for the October newsletter is **September 20.** Please email your library news, micro-reviews & photos (with captions & attributions) to [mlaFOCUSeditor@gmail.com](mailto:mlaFOCUSeditor@gmail.com)  
Thank You!
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The FOCUS welcomes your input! To submit feedback, articles, reviews, inquiries, and ideas—or to place an ad or provide sponsorship—please contact the editorial staff directly:

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